/41 cont./

755 782 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

● [756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.